CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (withdrawn) A system for the removal of a selected area of encapsulation material from an encapsulated object comprising:
   a gas delivery tube connected to a pressurized gas source for delivering a flow of gas through an outlet thereof;
   a means for heating the gas to a selected temperature range;
   and
   a means for directing the flow of heated gas onto a deposit of an encapsulant-removing agent, deposited on the surface of said encapsulated object, to sufficiently heat the encapsulant-removing agent causing the so-heated encapsulant-removing agent to remove at least a portion of the encapsulating material in contact with the so-heated encapsulant-removing agent.

2. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, wherein the encapsulant-removing agent is selected from solvents that will remove the encapsulating material when heated.

3. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, wherein the encapsulant-removing agent is selected from a group of acids that will remove the encapsulating material when heated.

4. (withdrawn) The system of claim 2, wherein the encapsulant-removing agent is selected from a group of acids including nitric acid or sulfuric acid.

5. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, wherein the gas is a substantially inert gas.

6. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, wherein the gas is nitrogen or argon or a mixture thereof.

7. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, wherein the gas is substantially moisture-free.

8. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, wherein the removing agent is deposited so as to form a substantially hemispheric or hemispheric-like formation on the surface of the encapsulated object.

9. (withdrawn) The system of claim 8, wherein the removing agent is deposited by placing one or more drops or droplets on the surface of the encapsulated object to form the substantially hemispheric or hemispheric-like formation.

10. (withdrawn) The system of claim 9, wherein the flow of heated gas is sufficient to form a depression or depression-like concavity in the said formation.

11. (withdrawn) The system of claim 10, wherein the flow of heated gas is sufficient to form a depression or depression-like concavity in the said formation and insufficient to cause the removing agent to migrate from its initially deposited position on the surface of the encapsulated object.

12. (withdrawn) The system of claim 11, wherein the removing agent is an acid selected from a group of acids including nitric acid or sulfuric acid.

13. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, further comprising a temperature sensor for sensing the temperature of the heated gas.

14. (withdrawn) The system of claim 13, further comprising a means for controlling the temperature of the heated gas.

15. (withdrawn) The system of claim 14, wherein the temperature of the heated gas is controlled between approximately 100 and 300 degrees Celsius.

16. (withdrawn) The system of claim 1, further comprising a flow controller for controlling the flow rate of the heated gas.

17. (currently amended) An encapsulation removal method for removing a portion of an encapsulating material from an encapsulated integrated circuit comprising the steps of:
depositing a selected volume of a liquid encapsulant-removing agent on a selected surface area of the surface of an encapsulated integrated circuit, the selected volume of the liquid encapsulant-removing agent sufficient to form a shape-sustaining and substantially position-maintaining deposit on the selected surface area;
subjecting the deposited liquid encapsulant-removing agent to a flow of a heated gas sufficient to heat the deposited liquid encapsulant-removing agent to cause the

so-heated liquid encapsulant-removing agent to remove at least a portion of the encapsulating material in contact with the so-heated liquid encapsulant-removing agent in the selected surface area, the flow of heated gas insufficient to cause the encapsulant-removing agent to migrate from its initially deposited position on the surface of the integrated circuit and the flow of heated gas and the encapsulated integrated circuit characterized by the substantial absence of relative movement therebetween during the heating of the deposited liquid encapsulant-removing agent.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the liquid encapsulant-removing agent is selected from solvents that will remove the encapsulating material when heated.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the liquid encapsulant-removing agent is selected from a group of acids that will remove the encapsulating material when heated.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the acid is selected from a group of acids including nitric acid or sulfuric acid.

21. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the gas is a substantially insert gas.

22. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the gas is nitrogen or argon or a mixture thereof.

23. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the gas is substantially moisture-free.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the removing agent is deposited so as to form a substantially shape-sustaining hemispheric or hemispheric-like formation on the surface of the encapsulated integrated circuit.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the removing agent is deposited by placing one or more drops or droplets on the surface of the encapsulated integrated circuit to form the substantially shape-sustaining hemispheric or hemispheric-

like formation.

26. (currently amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the flow of heated gas is sufficient to form a depression or depression-like indentation in the [[said]] formation.

27. (canceled)

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the removing agent is an acid selected from a group of acids including nitric acid or sulfuric acid.

29. (original) The method of claim 17, further comprising a temperature sensor for sensing the temperature of the heated gas.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, further comprising a means for controlling the temperature of the heated gas.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the temperature of the heated gas is controlled between approximately 100 and 300 degrees Celsius.

32. (original) The method of claim 17, further comprising a flow controller for controlling the flow rate of the heated gas.